



**Address at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual MLK Breakfast**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on January 12, 2018**





*This speech was presented to attendees of the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King Breakfast held at the Graham Center Ballrooms on January 12, 2017.*

Good morning, and welcome! Thank you to our keynote speaker, Valarie Kaur! We are honored to have you here today!

And a special thank you to Dr. Dorret Sawyers – and the MLK Committee as well as to all our students, faculty and staff who have also made this commemoration possible. Because of you, our FIU is an institution that carries on Dr. King’s work – not just one day of the year, but every single day.

As Dr. King told us: “The time is always right to do what is right.” At FIU, these are words we live by. We know that there is no better time to do what is right and what is good for this world, than right now.

That is why this quote is on two commemorative sculptures, here at MMC and BBC, to serve as permanent reminders of Dr. King’s life and legacy. And that keeping his dream for a better, more just world alive is our shared responsibility. It’s in our hands... not the hands of time.

This is more important than ever. Sometimes this world feels painfully divided, like there has been a slow fracturing of the bonds that we all share. We might feel helpless and uncertain. But, inside of each of us, we know what we must do.

We know there is only one way to begin to mend the divisiveness, bridge the divides, and repair the fractures. The anecdote is simple. It’s coming together and uniting as one and helping one another.

Indeed, our unity is our strength! Progress and positive change are only possible when we come together, like we are today, and stand united. This is how we build stronger communities; this is how we begin to build a better world for everyone.

We honor Dr. King this way through lending a helping a hand. Last year, during hurricane season, when we sheltered 500 evacuees from Monroe County and also to 100 special needs evacuees from the U.S. Virgin Islands, we honored Dr. King.

When our music students went out and played music for the evacuees to lift their spirits, we honored Dr. King. When we welcomed students from Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, who dreamed of continuing their education, we honored Dr. King. Every day, when we use the blessings of our talents in research, teaching, community partnerships, engagement and giving back, we honor Dr. King!

I am so proud that over the past 27 years, this breakfast has grown beyond a breakfast and into a well-deserved celebration of Dr. King. There is the MLK Day of Service where hundreds of students will participate in service learning projects that uplift our communities. And, of course, the Youth Forum & Peace Walk, and the MLK Day Parade held in Liberty City.

These — and so many more — remind us of everything Dr. King believed in. Love over hate. Forgiveness over blame. Hope over despair.

I urge you to get involved! Because here is something else Dr. King told us: “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”

The idea of acting with an open heart, with compassion and kindness — means serving others. This idea is closely and intricately connected to doing what is right. Because here is what we know, and what Dr. King knew, and why he sacrificed so much, including his freedom — doing what is right is the only way to move into the future!

So, let today serve as a reminder to keep living in this belief. Let’s work to continue to find ways to honor Dr. King and carry on his spirit of never giving up the dream of a better world.